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Sir John Macdonald, G.C.B.

BORN JANUARY 11, 1815; DIED JUNE 6, 1891.

MONUMENT

ERECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF MONTREAL.

UNVEILED

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF ABERDEEN,
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA,

June 6, 1895.

PRESENTED WITH THE COMPLIMENTS
OF THE PUBLISHERS OF
THE MONTREAL DAILY STAR.

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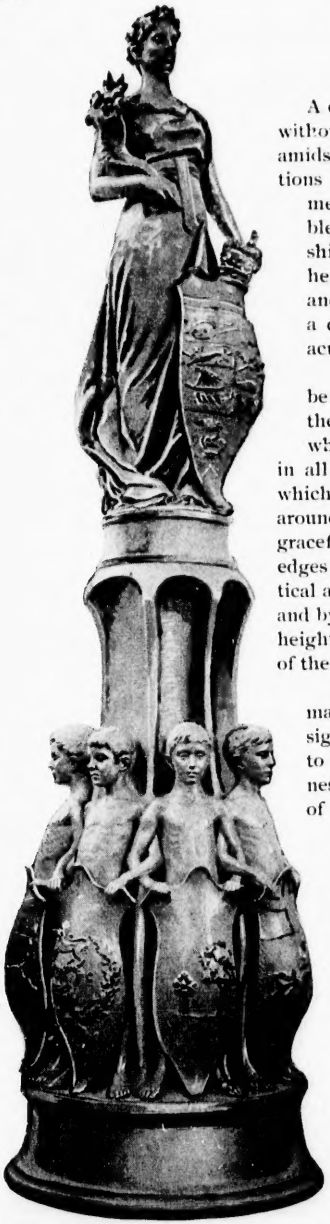
In Memoriam.



EMBLEM OF CANADA AND THE PROVINCES, SURMOUNTING THE MONUMENT.

A career, such as that of Sir John Macdonald, begun without the adventitious help of high birth and sustained amidst fierce competition, through the changing conditions of the last half century, is proof of the highest merits. Chance was never so constant. Men, public problems, political conditions changed about him as clouds shift and melt and gather again on an April day; but he faced every new combination with a confident eye and emerged from every conflict with the serene air of a conqueror. No confusion was too intricate for his acumen; no task too delicate for his matchless tact.

The importance of the life of the statesman is to be measured by the judgment he has used in framing the constitution of the country; by the ability with which he has managed to make his government conform in all requirements to that constitution; by the tact with which he has dealt with the discordant elements he finds around him; by the influences of a kindly heart and a graceful bearing with which he has smoothed the rough edges of partisan contests and softened the social and political asperities inevitable under all systems of government; and by the amount of respect, the warmth of love, and the height of admiration, with which he has imbued the masses of the people, whose suffrages he has secured.

Judged by these tests, the life of Sir John Macdonald may be well said to have been successful. His clear-sightedness in fashioning such legislation as will redound to the greatness of Canada in future ages; the devotedness of his life to the fixed principle of the maintenance of British connection for the northern half of the continent; the transcendency of his genius in reaching out and overcoming apparently insurmountable difficulties which might, if left alone, hinder the advancement and material prosperity of his loved country, has earned for his name that glory and honor which Montreal and Canada, Liberals and Conservatives are proud to accord to it to-day. The feeling which prompted the old Napoleonic motto: "There shall be no Alps," was strongly characteristic of the life of the late Sir John Macdonald. This was never better seen than in the unwavering courage with which he faced the task of encircling the Dominion with that iron belt which traverses this continent of America, from Halifax to Vancouver, the great transcontinental route of the Empire. The work was of such a stupendous nature that its very magnitude seemed to defy the

MONTREAL'S MONUMENT TO THE LATE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN MACDONALD, P.C., G.C.B.,
Unveiled by His Excellency The Earl of Aberdeen, Governor General of Canada,
June 6, 1895, Dominion Square.

puny arm of man; but the statecraft and the indomitable perseverance of Sir John Macdonald overcame these fears, and crowned the undertaking with success.

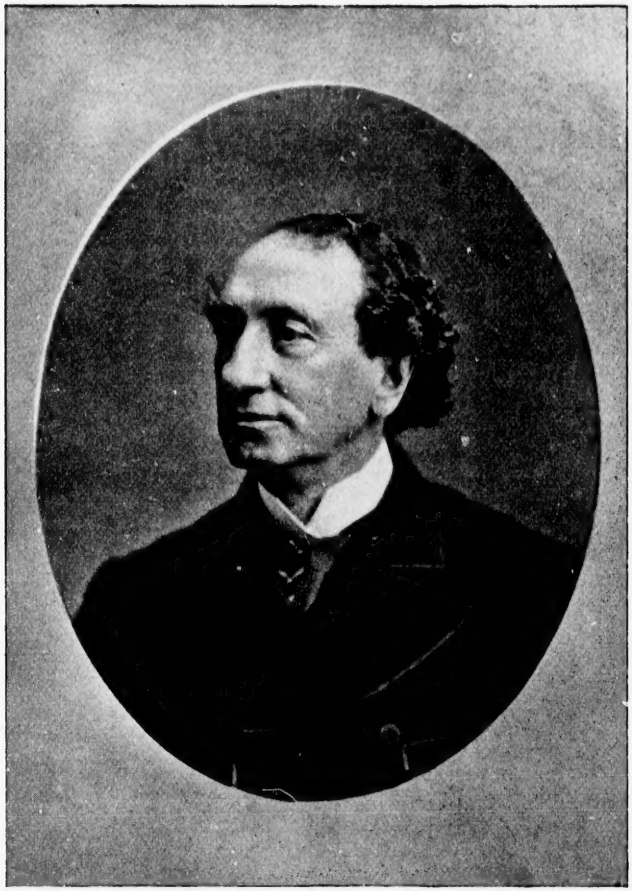
It is most fitting that the Macdonald memorial of Montreal should forever perpetuate the confederation of the scattered provinces of the Dominion, a work in which the late chieftain, while perhaps taking the initiative step, was ably assisted by members of both political parties. The condition of Canada, at that period, demanded a radical and wide-reaching change, and the combined energies of Reformer and Conservative were bent towards the foundation of an united Dominion. Perhaps Sir John was actuated in this regard by the vision of a future Imperial unity, of which Confederation was the forerunner. Patriotism, at any rate, constituted the key-note of the resolve which prompted the undertaking and engendered that devotion to "Canada's welfare, Canada's advancement, and Canada's glory," which ever marked his public actions. In promoting the welfare of Canada, the well-being of the Empire was enhanced. The love for British institutions, British judicial procedure and parliamentary methods, which the late Premier ever entertained, was strongly exhibited in his efforts to have Canada conform, as much as possible, in these respects, to the usages and customs of Great Britain. His struggles to build up an Empire for Britain on this continent, constituted the controlling motive of his life and the sum and substance of his ambition. When a supposed danger threatened the country, his patriotic instinct enabled him to sound a note of warning, giving rise to the expression, now historic. "A British subject I was born—a British subject I will die." His Queen, long ere this, had recognized the valuable services rendered to the cause of British unity by her Canadian subject, and honored him, in a signal manner, by the conferring—rare in colonial annals—of the title of G.C.B., the robes of which Order drape his figure to-day.

Sir John showed his power and ability, as a statesman, by the manner in which he controlled the heterogeneous masses which ever surrounded him. "He knew every cord of the human heart, he understood every passion that swayed men's characters." He had a wonderful power of sympathy and a charming personality. Perhaps this constituted one of the strongest agents in producing that success which invariably accompanied his labors in the political arena. Possessing a warm heart, he created many friends and seldom made an enemy. His mode of life, thoughts, feelings, conversation and home-life, were outward indications of the warm, genial disposition which swayed his personality.

Sir John Macdonald will ever be known as "the patriot statesman of Canada."

His life is a history of Canada.

ONE OF THE BRONZE LIONS.



THE LATE RT. HON. SIR JOHN MACDONALD, P.C., G.C.B.

SONNETS

ON THE UNVEILING OF THE MACDONALD STATUE.

JUNE 6TH, 1895.

I.

In this, the month of flowers, the month he loved,
First month of summer, in the which he died,
We meet to do him honor. All the pride
Of party, all the scorn which disapproved,
All acrid smoke of battle, is removed.
His greatness is his country's, and the wide
Dominion gives him praise, that will abide,
Who ruled so long and wisely, velvet-gloved.

This is the month of death, and month of flowers,
Of flowers that, dying, to fair fruit give birth,
Meet month for death of one whose wondrous powers
With vines of commerce overspread the earth.
His life's flower died when to perfection grown,
But left its fruit to ripen as our own.

II.

No record is required of fruitful deeds,
For these are ever-present, 'spite their age.
Upon some lives turns history no page
And death casts no oblivion. He that needs
A chronicler is half forgot. The seeds,
Consigned to earth, still win their heritage
Of present sunlight, and the statesman sage
Sowed fame that lives, defying time's rank weeds.

Macdonald needs no record, save the one
Carved on the tomb of the immortal Wren,
"Look round you," in St. Paul's, his great creation.
They both were architects, yet there is none
But knows which was the greater of these men.
Wren built a church, Macdonald built—a nation.

III.

While still a chimney towers towards the sky;
While farms still smile where once a desert was;
While still an engine its rich burden draws,
Eastward or westward, or swift steamers ply;
While still the flag Canadian waves on high;
While still the country boasts its upright laws,
And wealth nor poverty affects a cause,
The memory of Macdonald cannot die.

Of jealous, narrow, disunited, small
And struggling colonies his genius made
One compact, powerful nation, the chief gem
In Britain's crown, and though swift years shall fall,
Like snow on Alpine heights, still over them
Shall tower his fame, unequalled, undecayed.

ARTHUR WEIR.

MONTREAL.

MACDONALD MEMORIAL BAS-RELIEFS.